



United States Department of Justice

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* VIRGINIA

[U.S. Attorneys](#) » [Eastern District of Virginia](#) » [News](#)

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Virginia

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, March 15, 2021

## **Arizona Man Sentenced for Multimillion-Dollar Nationwide Investment Fraud Scheme**

NORFOLK, Va. – An Arizona man was sentenced today to 16 years in prison for his participation in a nationwide investment fraud conspiracy that cost victims over \$23 million in total losses.

“This defendant made millions of dollars by deceiving innocent investors and perpetuating a scheme that defrauded vulnerable victims out of their hard-earned retirement funds,” said Raj Parekh, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. “Today’s sentence sends a strong message that anyone in the financial services industry who lies, manipulates, and steals their way to success acts at their own peril and risks substantial jail time if they do not operate their practices truthfully and with integrity.”

According to court documents, Kent Maerki, 78, of Scottsdale, the founder of Dental Support Plus Franchise, LLC, and Janus Spectrum, LLC, made a multitude of misrepresentations about those businesses in materials used to solicit investments, including during appearances on radio shows and in a presentation about investments in wireless spectrum he called “Money From Thin Air.”

As part of this scheme, Maerki and his conspirators controlled numerous entities that sold purported “franchises” and “private equity” opportunities through salesmen across the country. Through these salesmen, the defendants targeted individuals at or near retirement and made numerous material misrepresentations and omissions to sell them illiquid, highly speculative investment vehicles. Maerki, who had been barred by a federal court in 1984 from selling securities, continued to sell the investments without disclosing that the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, the Virginia State Corporation Commission, and the Arizona State Corporation Commission were investigating the conspirators for fraud.

Many of the victims targeted in this scheme were elderly. Unsuspecting investors cashed out 401(k) retirement plans and other retirement accounts to invest in companies founded by Maerki, without knowledge that significant portions of their money were being transferred to other companies controlled by members of the conspiracy. As a result, some individual investors—including investors who were blind, disabled, or otherwise unable to return to work—lost hundreds of thousands of dollars from their retirement savings. The total amount of victim losses from this scheme exceeded \$23 million, and over \$4 million of those fraudulently obtained funds went to Maerki.

Raj Parekh, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Brian Dugan, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI’s Norfolk Field Office; Kelly R. Jackson, Special Agent in Charge, Washington, D.C. Field Office,

IRS-Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI); and Peter R. Rendina, Inspector in Charge of the Washington Division of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, made the announcement after sentencing by U.S. District Judge Raymond A. Jackson.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Melissa E. O'Boyle, Elizabeth M. Yusi, and Andrew Bosse prosecuted the case.

A copy of this press release is located on the website of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia. Related court documents and information are located on the website of the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia or on PACER by searching for Case No. 2:19-cr-47.

---

**Topic(s):**

Elder Justice

Financial Fraud

Securities, Commodities, & Investment Fraud

**Component(s):**

USAO - Virginia, Eastern

**Contact:**

Press Officer

USAVAE.Press@usdoj.gov

Updated March 18, 2021